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VI.—ON THE SEMANTICS OF -ΘΕΝ.¹

Wine is a mocker. So is Dionysos, Lord of the *hederae sequaces*, if not, on the vegetarian theory, the ivy itself. The Riddle of the Bacchae is capable of a farcical answer. Teiresias and Kadmos may readily be conceived as comical characters. I recall a successful travesty of the great Gessler scene in Wilhelm Tell, as performed in the Volkstheater of Munich in 1852. Dead earnest becomes a live jest. The Medea Rondanini is one with the monster that protrudes her tongue while Perseus saws off her head in what might seem to the uninitiated spectator mere fun. Irony is universal. The adversative participle is one with the causative. ἐπεὶ 'whereas' = 'because', turns out to be ἐπεὶ 'whereas' = 'although'. ἄρα 'therefore' is ἄρα 'after all'. We must know how to take a joke. In English 'sure' becomes the reverse of its etymon 'securus'. One dictionary definition is 'I will admit, you will admit', as in 'Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print', an archaic use, says the Concise English Dictionary, a familiar American use, at all events. It is a feeler. It is τοι. Some time ago in discussing the particles, I asked why 'forsooth' is invariably ironical and 'in sooth' invariably serious. I do not know. Nor do I know why -θεν gives a touch of irony. δῆπου is not always serious by any means. The lexicons give scope to its jesting resources. But δῆθεν is almost invariably ironical. Why? Let me go back to A. J. P. XXXVI 109, where I was in such haste to protest against the locative theory of the cases that I misquoted from memory a line from an old Spanish romance. '¿Donde vas, adonde?' it should be. But the mistake did not invalidate the argument; and I went on to say that 'instruments of precision are installed in modern vessels to determine the direction of sounds, so unsatisfactory is the operation of the human ear'. Not long ago a distinguished man of science lauded the invention of a new instrument for the sharper determination of the whence-sound. 'Heretofore', he said, 'mariners have not been able to tell within forty-five degrees the direction from which fog signals come'. Things are going to be different now, but they were not different in the days when -θεν was added, or was supposed to have been added, to δῆ. 'Thou canst not tell whence it cometh'—confusion, uncertainty, mockery.

B. L. G.

¹ This παραπλήρωμα was left over from my discussion of the particle δῆ A. J. P. XXXVII 370.